



City of San Diego  
County of San Diego



## NEWS RELEASE

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# LIBRARY DOORS NOW OPEN TO FOSTER KIDS

## *Supervisors Cox, Roberts, Mayor Sanders Roll Out Project Giving Foster Youth Their Own Library Cards*

Like all kids, their attention wandered from this morning's events; eyes darting toward stacks of books and the brightly-colored bookmobile filled with treasures that these foster youth can finally take home to savor word by word. For many foster youth in San Diego County, getting a library card and checking out a book had proven to be one more impossible challenge in their difficult young lives. Not any more, thanks to a project launched today by Supervisor Greg Cox, Supervisor Ron Roberts and Mayor Jerry Sanders that cut through the red tape that was preventing these abused and neglected kids from enjoying libraries.

In order to get a library card, all children under the age of 18 must have a parent or guardian act as co-signers on the card. Foster children who are separated from their parents often move from guardian to guardian, sometimes in and out of many different homes across the County. Foster children face many challenges including multiple changes in schools, unfamiliar people, new places, and a system that often cannot provide them with the everyday supports that they need to live a normal, healthy life. The process to sign up for a library card was extremely difficult for foster youth until the County agreed to act as co-signer and bear responsibility for any fines that the kids earned.

Supervisor Greg Cox and Supervisor Ron Roberts began the process in the County Library system and were on hand today with Mayor Jerry Sanders at the Polinsky Children's Center as foster kids were handed their library cards and checked out books from the County's mobile library. Smiles were plentiful as the kids eagerly flipped through book after book.

"Most foster kids have seen more hardship in their lives than many adults," said Supervisor Cox. "It was simply unfair to deny them library cards, especially when so many struggle to catch up in school."

Supervisor Ron Roberts added, "With the County acting as co-signer for foster children who want library cards, a burden is lifted from foster parents and all the tremendous resources of libraries will open to foster youth."

The City of San Diego Public Library enthusiastically signed on to the project, helping to plan and implement this groundbreaking program. "I am pleased that the City is part of this project," Mayor

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Sanders said. "Our City Library staff has worked hard to insure that foster youth have the same access to City Libraries that any kid would have and that all kids deserve."

The partnership between both the City and County Library systems results in over 60 branch locations where foster children and families will learn and explore through books and other library resources. The hope is that soon all nine library systems in the region will make their library cards available to foster youth.

Today's event was planned along with a series of literacy-related fun activities for the teens and children at the Polinsky Children's Center to celebrate the access to City and County libraries. Kids enjoyed a dance performance and magician, read aloud, checked out books and learned about the joy of reading from programs provided by the City and County libraries.

Foster parents who are interested in getting library cards for foster youth can visit any of the City's and County's combined 60 library sites. These locations and other information are available on the Internet from the San Diego County Library at [www.sdcl.org](http://www.sdcl.org) or the San Diego Public Library at [www.sandiego.gov/public-library](http://www.sandiego.gov/public-library). To learn more about becoming a foster parent please call (877) 792-5437.

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